CLAIM AMENDMENTS

The following is a detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application. A status identifier is provided for every claim and the current text of every claim is presented, unless the claim has been cancelled. Current amendments to the claims are expressed in the detailed listing by strikethrough or double-brackets (for deleted matter) or underlining (for added matter).

1. (Original) A method comprising:

establishing an agreement with a customer to provide X units of a product for an agreement price;

arranging with a retailer to have the product redeemed at the retailer; and

receiving data indicating a redemption of Y units of the product,

wherein Y is a non-integer.

2. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the agreement price is less than a current retail price offered by the retailer for the product.

3. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, further comprising:

receiving from the customer an offer to purchase the product for the agreement price; and

indicating an acceptance of the offer.

4. (Original) A method according to Claim 3, further comprising:

determining whether to indicate the acceptance based on a difference between the agreement price and a settlement price to be paid to the retailer.

5. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, further comprising:

determining a difference between the agreement price and a settlement price to be paid to the retailer; and

identifying a subsidy offer greater than the difference.

6. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, further comprising:

receiving from the customer a payment equal to the agreement price.

7. (Original) A method according to Claim 6, wherein the payment is received
in a plurality of installments.

8. (Original) A method according to Claim 6, wherein the payment is received after the X units of the product are redeemed.

9. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, further comprising:

paying the retailer a settlement amount after receiving the data indicating the redemption.

10. (Original) A method according to Claim 9, wherein the agreement price is a price per unit of the product, and the settlement amount is equal to Y multiplied by (a current retail price per unit of the product minus the agreement price).

11. (Original) A method according to Claim 10, further comprising receiving from the customer a payment equal to X multiplied by the agreement price.

12. (Original) A method according to Claim 10, wherein the agreement price is a price per unit of the product, and the settlement amount is equal to Y multiplied by (a predetermined price per unit of the product minus the agreement price).

13. (Original) A method according to Claim 12, further comprising receiving from the customer a payment equal to X multiplied by the agreement price.

14. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, further comprising:

paying the customer an amount paid by the customer to the retailer minus (the agreement price multiplied by Y),

wherein the agreement price is a price per unit of the product.

15. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, further comprising:

transmitting to the retailer the agreement to provide X units of the product for the agreement price.

16. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, further comprising:

receiving from the retailer a request for authorization to provide the product to the customer.

17. (Original) A method according to Claim 16, further comprising:

retrieving agreement information corresponding to the agreement; and

transmitting an authorization to the retailer to provide the product to

the customer.

18. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, further comprising:

updating data indicating a quantity remaining under the agreement

based on the received data.

19. (Original) A method to provide a product to a customer, comprising:

receiving a redemption identifier;

retrieving data indicating an agreement to provide X units of a product

for a customer-specified agreement price based on the redemption identifier;

authorizing a redemption of up to X units of the product; and

receiving data indicating a redemption of Y units of the product,

wherein Y is a non-integer.

20. (Cancelled)

21. (Original) A method to provide a product to a customer, comprising:

controlling a redemption device to stop dispensing a product after X

units of the product have been dispensed;

establishing an agreement with a customer to redeem additional units

of the product for an agreement price;

storing information corresponding to the agreement; and

providing the additional units to the customer.

22. (Original) A method to provide a product to a customer, comprising:

receiving a redemption identifier from a customer;

retrieving data indicating an agreement to provide X units of a product for a customer-specified agreement price based on the redemption identifier; and

providing Y units of the product to the customer,

wherein Y is a non-integer.

23. (Original) A method according to Claim 22, further comprising receiving the data indicating an agreement to provide X units of a product for a customer-specified agreement price from a controller.

24. (Original) A method according to Claim 22, further comprising determining a quantity remaining under the agreement.

25. (Original) A method according to Claim 24, further comprising transmitting the determined quantity remaining to the customer.

26. (Original) A method according to Claim 24, further comprising:

controlling a product redemption device to stop dispensing the product once the quantity remaining has been redeemed.

27. (Original) A method according to Claim 26, further comprising receiving an offer to purchase Z units of the product for the customer-specified agreement price once the quantity remaining has been redeemed.

28. (Original) A method according to Claim 26, further comprising receiving an offer to purchase X units of the product for a second customer-specified agreement price once the quantity remaining has been redeemed.

29. (Original) A method according to Claim 26, further comprising receiving an offer to purchase Z units of the product for a second customer-specified agreement price once the quantity remaining has been redeemed.

30. (Original) A method according to Claim 26, further comprising receiving an offer to purchase X units of the product for the customer-specified agreement price once the quantity remaining has been redeemed.

31. (Original) A method according to Claim 22, further comprising:

determining that an amount of the product redeemed by the customer exceeds a quantity remaining under the agreement.

32. (Original) A method according to Claim 31, further comprising:

calculating a difference between the amount of the product redeemed and the quantity remaining under the agreement; and

extracting a payment from the customer equal to the difference multiplied by a retail price for the product.

33. (Original) A method according to Claim 31, further comprising:

calculating a difference between the amount of the product redeemed and the quantity remaining under the agreement; and

extracting a payment from the customer equal to (the agreement price multiplied by the quantity remaining under the agreement) plus (the difference multiplied by a retail price for the product).

34. (Original) A method according to Claim 31, further comprising:

calculating a difference between the amount of the product redeemed and the quantity remaining under the agreement; and

extracting a payment from the customer equal to (the agreement price multiplied by the quantity remaining under the agreement) plus (the difference multiplied by a retail price for the product) plus a penalty.

35. (Original) A method according to Claim 31, further comprising:

calculating a difference between the amount of the product redeemed and the quantity remaining under the agreement; and

if the difference is less than a predetermined amount, extracting a payment from the customer equal to the agreement price multiplied by the difference.

36. (Original) A method according to Claim 31, further comprising:

calculating a difference between the amount of the product redeemed and the quantity remaining under the agreement; and

if the difference is less than a predetermined amount, extracting a payment from the customer equal to the agreement price multiplied by the quantity redeemed.

37. (Original) A method according to Claim 22, further comprising transmitting data indicating the redemption of Y units to a controller.

38. (Original) A method according to Claim 22, further comprising receiving a payment from the customer, the payment based on a current retail price offered by the retailer per unit of the product multiplied by Y.

39. (Original) A method according to Claim 22, wherein the agreement price is a price per unit, the method further comprising receiving a payment from the customer based on the agreement price multiplied by Y.

40. (Original) A method according to Claim 39, further comprising receiving a payment from a third party, the payment based on Y multiplied by (a settlement price per unit established with the third party minus the agreement price) .

41. (Original) A method according to Claim 22, further comprising receiving a payment from a third party, the payment based on a settlement price per unit established with the third party multiplied by Y.

42. (Original) A method according to Claim 22, further comprising transmitting data indicating a received payment and the Y redeemed units to a third party.

43. (Original) A method according to Claim 22, further comprising controlling a redemption device to provide the product to the customer for the agreement price.

44. (Original) A method according to Claim 22, further comprising updating the data indicating the agreement based on the redemption.

45. (Original) A method according to Claim 44, further comprising:

    generating a second redemption identifier encoding the updated data; and

    outputting the second redemption identifier to the customer.

46. (Original) Computer-executable process steps stored on a computer-readable medium, the process steps comprising:

    an establishing step to establish an agreement with a customer to provide X units of a product for an agreement price;

    an arranging step to arrange with a retailer to have the product redeemed at the retailer; and

    a receiving step to receive data indicating a redemption of Y units of the product,

    wherein Y is a non-integer.

47. (Original) Computer-executable process steps stored on a computer-readable medium, the process steps comprising:

    a receiving step to receive a redemption identifier;

a retrieving step to retrieve data indicating an agreement to provide X units of a product for a customer-specified agreement price based on the redemption identifier;

an authorizing step to authorize a redemption of up to X units of the product; and

a receiving step to receive data indicating a redemption of Y units of the product,

wherein Y is a non-integer.

48. (Original) Computer-executable process steps stored on a computer-readable medium, the process steps comprising:

a receiving step to receive a redemption identifier from a customer;

a transmitting step to transmit the redemption identifier to a controller;

a receiving step to receive authorization from the controller to provide up to X units of a product to the customer;

a controlling step to control a redemption device to stop dispensing the product after X units of the product have been dispensed; and

a determining step to determine whether the customer requests additional units of the product.

49. (Original) Computer-executable process steps stored on a computer-readable medium, the process steps comprising:

a controlling step to control a redemption device to stop dispensing a product after X units of the product have been dispensed;

an establishing step to establish an agreement with a customer to redeem additional units of the product for an agreement price;

a storing step to store information corresponding to the agreement;
and

a providing step to provide the additional units to the customer.

50. (Original) Computer-executable process steps stored on a computer-readable medium, the process step comprising:

a receiving step to receive a redemption identifier from a customer;

a retrieving step to retrieve data indicating an agreement to provide X units of a product for a customer-specified agreement price based on the redemption identifier; and

a providing step to provide Y units of the product to the customer, wherein Y is a non-integer.

51. (Original) An apparatus comprising:

means for creating an agreement with a customer to provide X units of a product for an agreement price;

means for planning with a retailer to have the product redeemed at the retailer; and

means for receiving data indicating a redemption of Y units of the product, wherein Y is a non-integer.

52. (Original) An apparatus for providing a product to a customer, comprising:

means for obtaining a redemption identifier;

means for obtaining data indicating an agreement to provide X units of a product for a customer-specified agreement price based on the redemption identifier;

means for allowing a redemption of up to X units of the product; and

means for obtaining data indicating a redemption of Y units of the product, wherein Y is a non-integer.

53. (Original) An apparatus for providing a product to a customer, comprising:

means for obtaining a redemption identifier from a customer;

means for delivering the redemption identifier to a controller;

means for obtaining authorization from the controller to provide up to X units of a product to the customer;

means for managing a redemption device to stop dispensing the product after X units of the product have been dispensed; and

means for identifying whether the customer requests additional units of the product.

54. (Original) An apparatus for providing a product to a customer, comprising:

means for managing a redemption device to stop dispensing a product after X units of the product have been dispensed;

means for creating an agreement with a customer to redeem additional units of the product for an agreement price;

means for saving information corresponding to the agreement; and

means for delivering the additional units to the customer.

55. (Original) An apparatus for providing a product to a customer, comprising:

means for obtaining a redemption identifier from a customer;

means for obtaining data indicating an agreement to provide X units of a product for a customer-specified agreement price based on the redemption identifier; and

means for delivering Y units of the product to the customer, wherein Y is a non-integer.

56. (Original) A method for redeeming a product, comprising:

receiving an offer to purchase a number of units of an offer product for an offer price;

indicating an acceptance of the offer;

transmitting a redemption identifier associated with the offer;

receiving the redemption identifier and data indicating a desired product;

determining if the desired product is equivalent to the offer product;

authorizing a redemption of the number of units of the product if the desired product is equivalent to the offer product; and

receiving data indicating a redemption of a fractional number of units of the product, the fractional number less than the number of units.

57. (Original) An apparatus comprising:

a processor; and

a memory in communication with the processor, the memory storing processor-executable process steps,

wherein the processor is operative with the process steps to:

i) receive an offer to purchase a number of units of an offer product for an offer price;

ii) indicate an acceptance of the offer;

iii) transmit a redemption identifier associated with the offer;

iv) receive the redemption identifier and data indicating a desired product;

v) determine if the desired product is equivalent to the offer product;

vi) authorize a redemption of the number of units of the product if the desired product is equivalent to the offer product; and

vii)   receive data indicating a redemption of a fractional number of units of the product, the fractional number less than the number of units.

58. (Previously Presented) A method comprising:

establishing an agreement with a customer via a website to provide a first number of units of a product for an agreement price;

arranging with a retailer to have the product provided to the customer at the retailer; and

receiving data indicating that the customer has received a second number of units of the product,

wherein the product is a liquid and the second number of units is either less than the first number of units or includes a fractional number of units of the product.

59. (Previously Presented) A method comprising:

establishing an agreement with a customer via a website to have a retailer provide a first number of units of a product for an agreement price; and

receiving data indicating that the customer has received a second number of units of the product,

wherein the product is normally sold by volume and the second number of units is either less than the first number of units or includes a fractional number of units of the product.